



02-02-13 Ruiru Men's Prison & Shopping

Today we visited our 14th prison and did our final party. James Kiragu, one of Amy's friends who works at her daughter's school, does prison ministry. He invited us to join him today, as well as other friends of his from America. Melody lives here in Nairobi, but she is from Arkansas. She had two other friends visiting her from Little Rock, and another American woman name Trisha, originally from Seattle, who now also lives here. She takes in foster children, so was carrying a 4 month old precious little baby, who she thinks will be adopted on Monday. Ironically the little boy is from *The Nest*, the first place we visited the day we arrived in Nairobi.

We arrived at the prison prior to the other Americans, so we waited in the covered visiting area. Next to it they had a field of coffee bean bushes and we found out that one of their prison industry projects was the coffee "plantation". The inmates took care of the fields, picked the beans, and then the beans were taken to a local factory for roasting and distribution.

Once the Americans arrived we were welcomed into the prison. There were 230 inmates at this facility. Ruiru is the main training site for all correctional officers across Kenya. We found out that all prison chaplains across Kenya have meetings where they all meet together, so we told Chaplain Philip that when they had their next meeting to ask the other Chaplains if they knew us. I wish I could be there to hear each of their stories about our visit to their prison.

The Ethiopian prisoners first sang two songs for us. They were filled with energy and smiles, as all the inmates we have met seemed to be. Then we were greeted by one of the head officials, who was also a Christian. I've been amazed at how open the prison staff have been about their faith and how welcoming everyone has been.

Then we did our normal songs, everyone loved them, and then we did the Parable of the Sower. Trisha, one of the other Americans, was "the rock". She was holding the baby, and as the "seeds" landed on her and "died", one of the inmates put his finger out and the baby grabbed his hand. It was such a special moment, and Elaine told us about it later. The prisoners' faces had just lit up when they saw the baby. Cathy was taking some photos, and she discovered later that she had actually captured this incredible moment on her camera! What a God moment captured now forever on camera!

I shared my story, talked about the butterflies and resurrection, and then Melody, the leader of the other group led us all in singing several fun songs with motions.

The Duty Officer thanked us at the end, and again we were so blessed by visiting the inmates in the prison.

We were invited to join the American Team for a visit with 30 mothers from Mathare, the largest slum in Kenya. But we were using a taxi and a "day rate" was for 8 hours so we couldn't go with them.

Instead, we were able to do some final shopping. We had done very little shopping on the trip, as our bags were so heavy and the last thing we wanted was to carry extra items all over Kenya with us. Plus,

Amy told us that items from all over Kenya are brought to the Nairobi markets anyway. We all enjoyed the bartering for items (I probably enjoyed it much more than the rest), but everyone got pretty good at it by the end of our shopping. We went to a mini-Masai market, where there were many vendors in small shops no bigger than 10x10 ft. (I bet there were easily 100 shops and possibly many more, although we couldn't go to all of them.) Gift items included jewelry, musical instruments, soap stone carvings, wood carvings, and fabrics. We thought we'd go home with empty, light bags, but we have managed to fill them. Although they are heavy, I don't think any of them are at the 50# limit.